**ACUTE PHARYNGITIS**

**DESCRIPTION:**

An inflammation or infection of the throat. Upon examination the tonsils, uvula (the fleshy hanging structure in the throat) and/or palate (roof of the mouth) are found to be red and swollen sometimes with white fluid on the tonsils depending on the cause of the sore throat.

**SIGNS AND SYMPTONS:**

One or more of the following will be present: a feeling of general discomfort, fever, headache, rash, difficulty swallowing, and sometimes postnasal drip.

There are two causes of Pharyngitis. The most common is a viral infection, and the other is bacterial streptococcal infection (strep).

Signs specific to Viral Pharyngitis are: prominent runny nose, cough, hoarseness, conjunctivitis (inflammation of the eye), diarrhea, sore throat, nasal congestion.

Signs specific to Pharyngitis with strep infection are: fever, white fluid on the tonsils, absence of cough, tenderness in lymph glands.

**DIAGNOSIS:**

A physical examination along with patient history is usually sufficient for determining a diagnosis of acute Pharyngitis (rapid onset, and typically a short period of time). If Pharyngitis with strep infection is suspected, diagnosis is confirmed through a positive rapid antigen test, or a throat culture.

**TREATMENT:**

Viral infections are treated using lozenges, mouthwashes, salt water gargles, ice collar, and aspirin. Aspirin is not given to children because of the threat of Reye’s syndrome.

Bacterial infections are treated with antibiotics.

**PATIENT ACTION:**

A warm saline gargle, consisting of ¼ - ½ teaspoon of salt dissolved in an 8 ounce glass of warm water, may temporarily help relieve some symptoms. Drink plenty of fluids and eat foods that are soft and easy to swallow (examples: applesauce, jello, pudding, smoothies, yogurt, soups, etc.) If you are a smoker you are strongly encouraged to stop. When using over-the-counter drugs follow directions on the package. When taking antibiotics finish the antibiotic as directed by your health care provider. If it is necessary to schedule a follow-up visit, it is important to keep that appointment. Pharyngitis with strep if left untreated may develop complications including rheumatic fever, rheumatic heart disease or kidney disease.

